

*Officials Sponsor Legislation To Preserve Millions In Federal Dollars
For The Long Island Sound*

*Participants Discuss Importance of Legislative Action, Restoration
Efforts and Funding Levels*

Oyster Bay, NY – Today, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Steve Israel hosted a Protect the Long Island Sound roundtable with local stakeholders at the Sagamore Yacht Club. Federal funding for restoration and stewardship programs to protect Long Island Sound expired at the end of 2011. Senator Gillibrand, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and Rep. Israel, a co-chair of the Long Island Sound Caucus, introduced legislation last month to support the restoration of Long Island Sound through 2016. The Sound borders New York and Connecticut, with 8 million people living on the coast and 20 million people living within 50 miles.

Senator Gillibrand said, "We need more federal investment in the Long Island Sound. The Long Island Sound is a natural treasure – it makes Long Island a great place to work, play, and raise a family. With more than 8 million people living along its waters, the Sound is not only critical to Long Island's environment and economy, but the entire region. During these tough economic times, the Sound provides an opportunity to promote economic growth on Long Island. As a member of the Environment & Public Works Committee, I am committed to taking the steps needed to restore the Sound and promote environmental protection and economic development for generations."

Rep. Israel said, "Long Island Sound is critical to our regional economy, our environment and our community. If we don't protect and restore the Sound, a \$9 billion economic engine, we will damage industries and ultimately lose jobs. That's why I'm continuing my efforts to preserve, protect and restore the Sound. As co-chair of the Long Island Sound Caucus, I have long been committed to this effort. I am proud to stand with Senator Gillibrand today and reaffirm our commitment and support the restoration of the Sound through 2016."

Long Island Sound is a 1,320 square mile estuary designated as an Estuary of National Significance that is being threatened by pollution and habitat loss. Its local economic contribution from sport and commercial fishing, boating, recreation and tourism is estimated to produce \$9 billion annually. However, decades of overdevelopment, pollution, dumping of dredged materials, and releases of untreated sewage have severely hurt the water quality.